THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) In view of reply to part (a), question does not arise.

Concessions for bulk mailing of commercial articles

401. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have offered concessions for bulk mailing of commercial articles through bulk-mail counters;

(b) if so, what is the rationale behind extending such concessions; and

(c) whether Government propose to consider enforcing a two-slab system of postal tarif-one for the public at the existing subsidised rates and the other for commercial trade community on actual cost basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) A rebate is now given at Bulk Mail Centres when pre-sorted letters commercial or otherwise of a specified minimum number are presented for posting.

(b) when bulk mail is presented in a pre-stored condition, there is a saving on staff costs in the posting office and mail can also be despatched expeditiously.

(c) There is no such proposal at present. However, in so far as postcards are concerned, a higher rate for postcards containing printing communication as compared to other postcards is already in force.

Programmes sponsored for rural telephones

402. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Three Indian Groups of Telecom companies are separately sponsoring a programme for rural telehones; and

(b) if so, the details therof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Participation of Private Sector Companies for improvement of Telecommunications

403. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to include Private Sector for the improvement of telecommunications in the country;

(b) if so, whether any package of financial incentives has been recommended;

(c) is so, whether the Private Sector has urged Government that the package should be on the same pattern as that of four projects; and

(d) if so, how many private sector companies have come forward for the development of telecommunications in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) There are certain proposals in this regard which are under consideration of the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) About eight exploratory proposals have been received for division of telecom services in different part of the country.

Privatisation of telephones in the country

404. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplaing privatisation of telephones in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether the telephones would be available on demand to public in the country; and

(d) whether Government contemplate to install public call office within every five kms. on the National and the State highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) By the end of the 8th Five Year Plan, the waiting period for telephoses in large systems will be brought down to 2 years with telephones available practically *on demand* in the tribal and rural areas. Efforts will be made to progressively reduce the waiting period such that telephones are available on demand by the turn of the century.

(d) No, Sir.

Formation of Joint Venture by Telecom. New Zealand (TNZ)

405. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Telecom. New Zealand (TNZ) has formed a joint venture with Bharati Telecom. Punjab State Electronics Development and Production Corporation and U.S. based NRI;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the joint venture has planned to invest Rs. 50 crore on this project and also to set up Rs. 100 crore captive network for the State Government; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No such proposal has been received by the Government.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of the reply to part (a).

कुल्लू जिले के एक गांव में उप डाकघर का खोला जाना

406. **श्री महेश्वर सिंह** : क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने गांव बारी ग्राम पंचायत में ऊगी, जिला कुल्लू में शाखा डाकघर खोलने की स्वीकृति प्रदान की थी ;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि पंचायत की अनुशंसा पर ए०पी०ओ० महोदय ने शाखा डाकखघर खोलने के लिये गांव बारी, ग्राम पंचायत से ऊगी, जिला कुल्लू में 15 नवम्बर को निर्धारित स्थान का दौरा किया था ;

(ग) क्या यह भी सच है कि वहां पर तैनात करने के लिये कर्मचारियों का चयन भी कर लिया गया था और उन्हें नियुक्ति पत्र भी दे दिए गए थे ; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो उप शाखा डाकघर खोलने और कर्मचारियों की नियुक्ति को रोकने के क्या कारण हैं ; और किस प्राधिकारी ने ऐसे आदेश जारी किए ?